

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

DDI #4935-82
14 June 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council
Senior Review Panel
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM : MG Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for
General Purpose Forces

SUBJECT : General Purpose Forces Production Program

1. For some time the GPF production program has suffered from a number of criticisms within the intelligence community. The most important of these relate to:

- lack of coordination between national and agency/departmental production;
- poorly identified and articulated requirements for production;
- repetitive production of more and more detail [redacted] with less regard for analysis of cogent issues and timeliness.

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2. I propose to attack the roots of this criticism with a comprehensive program incorporating both long and short term elements.

(a) Long Term - We must recognize that we have a number of constituencies to serve with our estimates and memoranda, including the intelligence community itself. Many of our "customers" require rather extensive specificity inasmuch as they depend upon our data for underpinning the design, analysis and justification of force and weapons programs involving large resource packages. In addition, many of our key judgments are credible only when there is ample presentation of the evidence and transparent analysis

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and explanation of the logic used in arriving at our conclusions.

I propose that, in conjunction with the principal community contributors, we establish a basic GPF long term production program which would lay out an agreed agenda for national level documents for a two-year period. The program would identify the basic building blocks required for a comprehensive understanding of Soviet general purpose forces, and prioritize those which require attention at the national level during the two-year period. While the program components and priorities may change over time, the program would provide us the following:

- a comprehensive base line expression of required national studies from which deviations may be made as increments or decrements;

- a tool for agency/departmental production managers to assist in preparing for scheduled national production efforts and around which they may plan their own programs;

- a compendium of all recognized GPF topical areas of intelligence concern which are necessary for addressal of major issues of national importance at either national or departmental level.

At the same time we will review the structure and format of basic military estimates, such as NIE 11-14, to determine how best to serve the universe of customer demands and to enhance their estimative flavor.

(b) Short Term This part of the program is intended to correct what may be the most serious weakness of our current approach. One critic has described our largest product, [] as a "catalogue-sized child's guide to the Warsaw Pact"; another has criticized it as "unread, useful only as a reference work,...(having) little impact on important policy decisions." We may have lost sight of our other constituency, the senior policy makers, the NSC, and, ultimately, the President. The current "blockbuster" format of our production simply does not lend itself to the conciseness and timeliness which our leadership requires.


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To address this problem, I propose that we undertake a series of short, pithy, and timely issue-oriented estimates and memoranda that address matters of interest to senior policy makers. These ad hoc papers would go beyond the more structured estimative program addressing such issues as:

- Developing Soviet Military Strategy for Southwest Asia and Implications for US Interests in the Persian Gulf;
- The Military Campaign in Afghanistan: Successes, Failures, Prospects, and Implications;
- Future Soviet Conventional Forces -- Factors Shaping Forces into the 1990s;
- The Impact of Poland's Economic Crisis on Its Military Forces and Capabilities;
- Warning of War in Europe.

Such estimates would be undertaken as issues were identified, drawing upon the base established in the larger long term production program and in accordance with current guidance from the NFIB.

3. Attached is a draft scheme identifying basic building blocks from which a long term agenda can be developed. This document will be circulated within the community for discussion. When fully developed, I recommend that it be submitted, together with a two-year production program, to the NFIB for approval. Further, I recommend that we request NFIB members to solicit from their agency/departamental policy counterparts an initial list of short-range estimate topics to provide a basis for our work program.


Edward B. Atkeson

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As Stated

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